

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

CITY COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED ON:

January 14, 2004

SUBJECT/TITLE:

Discussion of City/County Advanced Life Support Agreement

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

On December 10, 2003, staff provided the City Commission with an update of negotiations between the City and Leon County regarding the agreement for the Tallahassee Fire Department (TFD) to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) using TFD personnel, apparatus, and fire stations. Since that time, the City and County have developed a new proposal in which the County would pay the total salaries and benefits, rather than the paramedic stipend, for 35 fire department employees from the MSTU. City staff updated costs projections and considers the new proposal as an equitable approach, although implementation will require the extension of the City's MSTU through at least September 30, 2009, and will reduce the County's payments under the existing fire services agreement.

HISTORY/FACTS/ISSUES

Both City and County staffs have been working diligently together for months to develop an Emergency Medical Response System that best meets the needs of our community. Some of these efforts were culminated on December 31, 2003 when the County commenced operation of countywide EMS and stationed three ALS ambulances in the county and four ALS ambulances in the city on duty 24 hours per day. To enhance services, Leon County is requesting the Tallahassee Fire Department to operate five ALS First Response engines inside the city. This plan will improve ALS response times for both city and county residents.

The proposed agreement, which would terminate on December 31, 2008, concurrent with the fire service agreement, retains the following provisions discussed on December 10. TFD will provide ALS from five fire stations located within the City's boundaries. The County will provide all capital and non-capital equipment, disposable supplies, and paramedic continuing education training at no cost to the City. The City Manager and County Administrator will meet each year prior to July 1 to discuss expansion of services (refer to Attachment 2, ALS Agreement).

Although the ALS payment utilizes countywide resources, there is an enhanced level of service benefit to the City. As a result, staff has agreed to a fire services offset with respect to the County fire services agreement. The dollar amount of the offset will be determined by the ratio of the taxable property value of the unincorporated area to the taxable property value of the entire county times the annual ALS payment (refer to Attachment 1).

RECOMMEND ACTION:

OPTION 1: Approve the City/County ALS agreement for implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT

The attached Cost for ALS First Response provides a summary of projected ALS first response costs for this proposal. As in previous proposals, a 4% annually compounded escalator has been built in to offset increases in program expenditures.

Thomas Quillin, Chief
Tallahassee Fire Department

Anita R. Favors
City Manager

For Information, please contact: Thomas Quillin, Fire Chief, Ext. 660

In order for the County to make the investment into this program in the manner proposed, they desire a longer commitment from us on approval of an MSTU and would request that it be consistent with the length of the contract.

Option 1

Approve the City/County ALS agreement for implementation.

Pros:

- The agreement utilizes the existing talents and expertise of TFD to provide advanced life support services at a reduced response time to county residents and also provides an enhanced level of service to areas within the city limits.
- Program is cost effective and makes effective use of existing personnel and station locations.
- All costs are covered.

Cons:

- Higher accountability (patient care, paperwork) for TFD staff.
- Redistribution of TFD paramedic personnel among shifts.
- Although the City Commission initially had reservations regarding extending the MSTU for more than two years, this agreement requires that the MSTU be available for use through the life of the contract. The terms and conditions of the revised contract may be such that they mitigate the Commission's original concerns.

Option 2

Do not approve the proposed agreement.

Pros:

- None.

Cons:

- The City has authorized an MSTU tax on City residents, but has no say in the level of care given in the EMS system.
- Poor utilization of existing resources.

Option 3

Provide Staff with other policy direction.

ATTACHMENTS/REFERENCES

1. Tallahassee Fire Department Cost for ALS Response
2. Draft City/County ALS Agreement
3. Board of County Commissioners Agenda Item – January 13, 2004